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ACCESSION NO

INFANTRY COMBAT

Part Three: Beachhead At Salerno

Part Four:
Operations On Guadalcanal

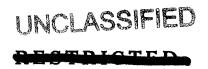
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THIS PAMPHLET IS THE SECOND OF A SERIES DEVOTED TO FACTUAL NARRATIVES FROM THEATERS OF OPERATIONS. IT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED AT THE INFANTRY SCHOOL BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL, ARMY GROUND FORCES.

NOTE

Each infantry regiment is being furnished 30 copies of this bulletin in order that distribution may be made to companies.

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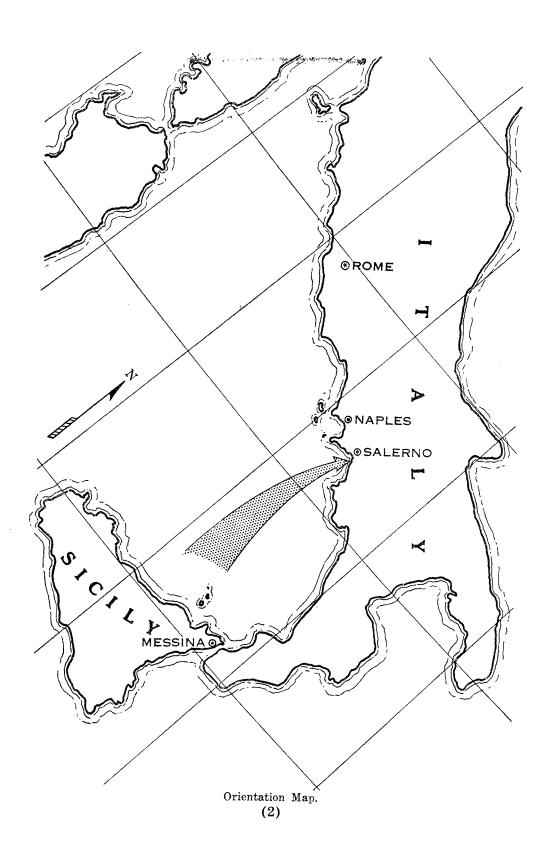
INFANTRY COMBAT

PART THREE: BEACHHEAD AT SALERNO

Part One of the Infantry Combat series dealt with the operations of a rifle company at Eddekhila, North Africa, while Part Two was the story of a rifle platoon leader who took part in the capture of Attu. Both narratives were arranged in chronological order and gave fairly complete pictures of small-unit operations during specific periods of combat.

Part Three describes a phase of the Salerno operations from a different standpoint. The narrative is based upon the report of a field officer who participated in the operation and who supplemented his personal observations with extracts from unit journals and by interviews with officers and men who took part in the action. The narrative, consequently, gives only a general account of one division's operations over a period of nine days, plus what may be termed "action flashes" concerning a number of units and individuals.

Thus, while the reader of this narrative is not given the opportunity to follow any one small unit through its consecutive experiences in the fight for the beachhead, he is presented with a considerable variety of tactical situations which show not only the difficulties to be met in a landing operation, but also some of the means which were taken in one division sector to overcome these obstacles.



THE LANDING, 9 SEPTEMBER

On 8 September 1943, personnel and materiel of the 36th Division were aboard American and British ships, which took positions after dark about 10 miles off the Italian coast, south of Salerno, in a zone opposite the beach area assigned the division.

Early that evening Marshal Badoglio broadcast the announcement of Italy's unconditional surrender. Preparatory naval and air bombardment, scheduled to begin a few hours later on the coast defenses, was cancelled, although about midnight an order was issued that naval guns would support the landing if it were opposed.

Shore boundaries of the 36th Division were the Solofrone River on the south and the Fiumerella on the north (figure 1).1 The division order assigned Green and Yellow beaches, between the Solofrone and Capodifiume Rivers, to Combat Team A, which was to land an assault battalion on each beach. Blue and Red beaches, between the Capodifiume and the Fiumerella, were assigned to Combat Team B, which was also to put ashore two assault battalions abreast. Landings were to be simultaneous, beginning at 0330, 9 September.²

The two Combat Teams had instructions to move inland rapidly to Highway No. 18 and the railroad, there reorganize, and prepare to meet counterattacks from the northeast or southeast. Provided that no counterattacks materialized, the assault regiments were next to push forward to the first phase line: Agropoli-Ogliastro-Trentinara-Mt. Soprano-La Cosa River.3 Motorized flying columns were to precede the advance from the highway and railroad, and seize key points on the high ground.4

FM 100-5, par. 493. "Zones of action are defined by designating their lateral boundaries or by the assignment of a front of deployment and the designation of the lateral bound-limits of the objective. An open flank ordinarily is not bounded. In some situations the designation of the objective is sufficient to indicate the zone of action. In large units the designation of objectives and boundaries may be made from the map; in small units these designations are made on the ground. Points designated should be identified easily on the ground."

²FM 7-40, par. 170α. "The orders of the higher commander assign the regiment a mission, designate its zone of action, indicate the units that are attached or will support the regiment, prescribe a general line of departure, and ordinarily fix the time of attack.

³FM 7-40, par. 161c(1). "When phase lines are employed as a means of control, they serve as intermediate march objectives on which further action may be coordinated. ... Phase lines are sought which favor friendly observation and action and act as a mask to hostile observation and action. To this end they should connect laterally those terrain features which afford observation and fields of fire for artillery and infantry heavy weapons; which afford natural obstacles to hostile mechanized forces; and which conceal the activities of friendly forces to the rear."

FM 100-5, par. 216. "Terrain features that afford observation of the hostile dispositions constitute especial objectives of reconnaissance. Active and aggressive action of patrols in seizing such terrain features is indicated."

FM 100-5, par. 432. "The advance guard . . . in proximity to the enemy, . . . seizes and holds important features of the terrain, particularly those that will cover the deployment of the main body from hostile observation and provide good observation and defilade for the employment of artillery. According to circumstances, it pushes back hostile covering detachments, or opposes the enemy advance long enough to permit the main body to make its dispositions."

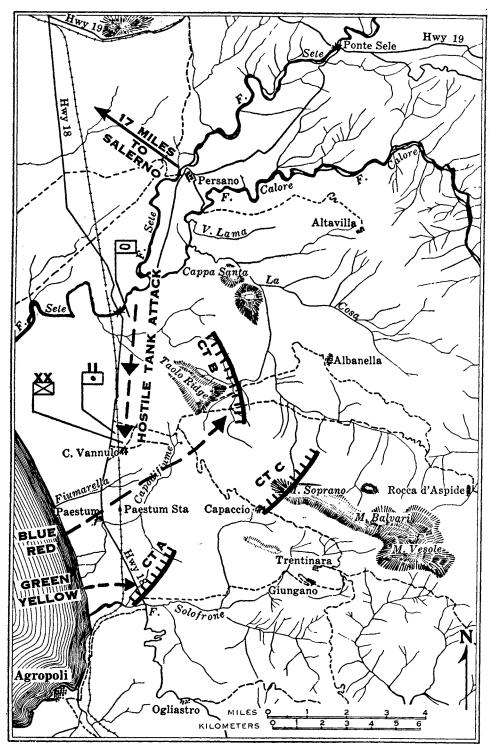


FIGURE 1. (4)

The supporting artillery was to follow close behind the assault regiments, the howitzers being landed on $2\frac{1}{2}$ -ton amphibious trucks, known as "Ducks" from the manufacturer's designation, DUKW-353. The Ducks were to beach under cover of darkness, then serve as prime movers to bring the howitzers to positions where the infantry advance could be supported or counterattacks repelled.

Combat Team C, in division reserve, had orders to land at Red Beach at 0630.

Troops of the assault regiments faced heavy artillery and machinegun fire as they landed. This intense fire produced considerable disorganization, not only among units which tried to assemble on the beach, but also offshore, where boats with equipment and ammunition were sunk, thus adding to the difficulty of bringing the infantry supporting weapons into action. Some companies were able to push in from the beach with organization intact; others were intermingled during the first day's fighting.

As the assault units landed and moved inland in the dark, they failed to clear out all the German machine-gun positions. These unmolested guns, supported by German artillery and a few tanks, continued to fire on successive landing echelons. There were, fortunately, no German air attacks in the beach sector until all combat units had been landed.

Combat engineers and attached special units, coming in behind the assault troops, encountered many difficulties. They found little wire to impede them, but mines caused both casualties and damage to vehicles. Six engineer officers were shot down by tank fire, and the first bulldozer ashore was destroyed by a shell from a tank at a range of 150 yards.

Parts of the division reconnaissance troop were landed early in the morning. Four groups were formed, each of about 20 men and 10 vehicles, to act as flying columns; however, they were unable to break through and were forced to remain behind the infantry. At 1300 one group operating with Combat Team B penetrated the German screen. This group fought tanks and armored vehicles for an hour and a half, until compelled to retire behind the infantry. Two German tanks were knocked out by 37-mm fire at 600 yards.

Later in the day the commander of the division reconnaissance troop took one platoon to examine the bridge over the Sele River on the north flank. Fired on by three German reconnaissance cars dug-in in a field near the road, the platoon moved into a farmyard inclosed by a rock wall. Two of the German cars were set afire by shells of the platoon's 81-mm mortar mounted in a ½-ton truck, firing from the yard. The platoon then proceeded on its mission and accomplished it.

(5)

⁵ FM 100-5, par. 39. "Cavalry obtains its best results by the rapidity and flexibility of its methods of attack and defense rather than by the sustained offensive operations that are required of Infantry."

⁶ FM 100-5, par. 44. "Mechanized reconnaissance units are pushed well forward and to the flanks. They may be reinforced by armored or motorized units, heavy in fire power, in order to delay or block hostile armored or motorized threats."

The artillery started from the ships in good time. The first Ducks with howitzers on board were lowered at 0222, and at 0300 all were in the water. The close approaches to the beach, however, were interdicted by German prepared artillery fires, and many of the drivers—not wishing to lose both Duck and howitzer—kept circling beyond the zone of shell fire, about 350 yards offshore, until dawn. Shortly afterwards they were ordered to beach, regardless of the hostile fire, and were able to come ashore with minor losses.

Several general staff officers of the division landed close behind the assault units. This party constituted a forward echelon which supervised and assisted in the organization along the beach and the unloading of equipment. There was delay in bringing some of the special units to shore; consequently improvisation in performing specialist functions, notably those of quartermaster detachments, was necessary during the greater part of the first day.⁸

Lack of supporting fire hindered the beach organization. Word from the first regimental commander ashore that the landing was opposed reached the ships shortly after 0330, but the naval fires authorized in the event of resistance were not forthcoming in this sector until afternoon, when some of the German artillery in the hills was silenced. In spite of enemy fire, the landing of supplies continued and by late afternoon the beaches were covered with piles of boxes. All supplies were moved to inland dumps before the first German air bombardment.

The division commander and his staff party landed at Red Beach at 0755, and started immediately for Paestum Station, the initial CP for the division. The officers were on foot and under continuous shellfire until they were well beyond the station. While trying to land the division commander's jeep, the driver was killed by a shell, and when the radio operator attempted to bring the vehicle ashore, it was blown up by a mine. The division commander's command car was also destroyed by a mine, but the driver escaped. A replacement command car finally overtook the staff party in the late afternoon. Because of heavy enemy artillery fire, the commanding general and his staff did not remain at Paestum Station, but turned north and continued to C. Vannulo, the second point designated for the division CP.9

The protective value of the helmet was illustrated during the staff party movement. The division surgeon was hit by a shell fragment which

⁷ FM 100-5, par. 497. "The best guarantee for success in the attack is effective cooperation between the troops in the attack echelon (and) the supporting artillery."

⁸ FM 100-5, par. 123. "The situations that confront a commander in war are of infinite variety. In spite of the most careful planning and anticipation, unexpected obstacles, frictions, and mistakes are common occurrences in battle. A commander must school himself to regard these events as commonplace and not permit them to frustrate him in the accomplishment of his mission."

⁹ FM 100-5, par. 164. "In closely coordinated operations requiring the movement of command posts, each large unit may designate its own axis of signal communication by naming the probable successive locations of its command post."

ripped out a piece from the back of his helmet and tore out the liner, but the only injury inflicted was a slight surface cut.

The first two waves of the leading battalions of Combat Team C, division reserve, landed simultaneously at 0645. The third wave, accompanied by the regimental commander, came in close behind. The shore was still under heavy German artillery and machine-gun fire, and elements of Combat Team B were just clearing the beach. To avoid losses, the division reserve units moved promptly on Paestum and completed their reorganization along the railroad and the highway by 1045. The landing of the cannon company was seriously delayed. Until 1430 only one 75-mm section of this company was with the regiment, and the 3d Platoon did not join until 0800, 10 September.

The operations of the three combat teams for the rest of 9 September may be summed up as follows:

CT A had the mission of seizing the high ground generally in the vicinity of Ogliastro—Trentinara and of clearing the area near Agropoli. Enemy infantry, estimated as a battalion, supported by artillery furnished considerable opposition, and by nightfall CT A had made little progress.

CT B by dark reached positions roughly as shown on figure 1. One infantry battalion of CT C was retained as division reserve, while the rest of the regiment was brought into action in the gap between the other two combat teams.¹⁰ By 1730 one rifle company had occupied the northwest spur of Mt. Soprano, while another rifle company with a heavy weapons platoon had secured Capaccio by 1815.¹¹

As the division pushed inland on a wide arc, a German tank attack came from the north, and struck in the vicinity of C. Vannulo.¹² This counterattack, launched by 13 tanks, endangered both the division CP and the beachhead. Fortunately, one of the artillery batteries had reached the area thirty minutes before and was able to go into action and destroy 4 of the tanks. Two more were demolished by a self-propelled 75-mm from the cannon company of CT C, which engaged the enemy from the flank. Rocket launcher teams from CT B and CT C also participated in the fight.

About 1315 another tank attack developed in the same area but was driven back. A total of 19 German tanks were reported knocked out in the division sector during the day, one rifle company disposing of 2 with one rocket launcher. "The bazooka firer said he used 4 rounds on the first tank before hitting it, but hit the next tank with the first rocket fired. He said he had not had sufficient practice with the bazooka before going into combat, but after he got the range on the 4 rounds it was easy."

¹⁰ FM 100-5, par. 479. "When open flanks exist or when there is danger of a hostile threat some reserves are disposed to meet dangerous contingencies."

¹¹ FM 7-20, par. 132a(1). "Exceptionally, when the nature of the terrain makes control extremely difficult, heavy machine-gun and 81-mm mortar units may be attached to rifle companies of the attacking echelon."

¹² FM 100-5, par. 250. "Terrain and the road net influence the employment of mechanized forces. A map study, supplemented by air and ground reconnaissance, will disclose avenues of approach which may favor or impede mechanized operations."

Late in the evening tank destroyer and tank units began to arrive from the beach, and were mostly sent to the north flank, as air reconnaissance, statements of prisoners, and other information of the enemy indicated the probability of attack from this direction.¹³ The 29th Panzer Division was reported concentrating 30 or 40 miles to the northeast, while the 16th Panzer Division, now in contact with the 36th Division, was expected to withdraw and join the 29th. These combined German units might then strike down the corridor between the Sele and Calore rivers.¹⁴

The Division Commander, meanwhile, directed that at dark all units were to hold in place, reorganize, and be prepared to move out next morning to their assigned objectives.

OPERATIONS, 10-17 SEPTEMBER

The week which followed the day of landing saw considerable fighting and many changes in the positions of units of the 36th Division.

Comparatively little happened on the south flank. By afternoon 10 September, CT A had reached the line: Agropoli—Ogliastro. CT C (less its 1st Battalion in division reserve) established contact with CT A, extended previous occupation of the Mt. Vesole—Mt. Soprano ridge, and approached Trentinara and Giungano.

Advance elements of CT C destroyed a German reconnaissance detachment early in the morning of 10 September east of Capaccio. "All enemy personnel were killed or captured: 7 Germans were killed and 9 captured, including an officer. We captured 4 armored cars which were turned in to the division CP at C. Vannulo. One armored car and 5 armored reconnaissance cars were knocked out in this encounter. The armored car was hit by a bazooka and burned. The bazooka firer had taken position in a concrete pit at the end of a culvert just around a bend in the road. The distance was approximately 75 feet. The others were fired on by our 37-mm and 57-mm AT guns, and one self-propelled 75. Do not know how many were knocked out by the different type weapons. The Germans were caught in a bend of the road with a rock wall on the outside."

Early on 11 September the 3d Battalion of CT C occupied Giungano and Trentinara (figure 2). From this date on the center of gravity shifted north until only one infantry battalion, of Combat Team A, was left in the southern part of the sector.

On 10 September CT B had been moving east and northeast toward Albanella and Altavilla, and about noon on the 11th one battalion occupied the latter village. One tank battalion and one tank destroyer battalion were in position on the north flank of the 36th Division.

¹⁸ FM 100-5, par. 252. "The means for protection against mechanized attack...include antitank guns, artillery,... tank units and armored divisions." Par. 593. "Antitank guns in each echelon of troops are disposed to cover the most likely avenues of approach of hostile mechanized units."

¹⁴ FM 100-5, par. 194. "From adequate and timely military intelligence the commander is able to draw logical conclusions concerning enemy lines of action."

Meanwhile on 11 September units of the 45th Division, which had landed at Red Beach, moved into the corridor between the Calore and Sele rivers. A field artillery battalion repulsed a German attack of 25 tanks in this corridor, destroying 11 and immobilizing 3.

The 12th of September was a very active day. Shortly after noon the 36th Division CP received word that a German force estimated to be an infantry battalion supported by artillery had recaptured Altavilla and isolated two companies of CT B on the high ground northeast of the village. Meantime, the 1st Battalion of CT C had been taken from division reserve and dispatched to Red Beach as part of a task force which was to move by water to support a Ranger battalion near Salerno. The 2d Battalion of CT C replaced the 1st in division reserve and was moved to Taolo Ridge. Early in the afternoon the 3d Battalion was ordered from Capaccio to a cover position behind Taolo Ridge. ¹⁵

As the afternoon wore on, further shifts were made in the dispositions of CT C. One battalion of CT B was attached to CT C. The 2d Battalion of CT C was directed to move by groups no larger than companies from Taolo Ridge to positions just south of Calore River, and to cross the river after dark to relieve a unit of the 45th Division which had been holding an area in the corridor between the Sele and Calore rivers. The 3d Battalion of CT C, previously ordered behind Taolo Ridge, was directed to continue on to the high ground in the vicinity of Cappa Santa. During the night of 12-13 September this battalion attacked and retook Altavilla.

On 13 September two battalions of CT A were detached by the Corps Commander for movement to the north to fill a gap between the 45th Division and a British division. About noon the Germans attacked the 2d Battalion of CT C in the Sele-Calore corridor. The following account of the action was given 4 days later by the battalion executive:

"We relieved a unit of the 45th Division under cover of darkness and dug in that night the best we could without engineer tools. We had no artillery support and no communications except by runners. There was a gap between us and the troops near Altavilla. We sent a patrol to contact troops on our left and I never heard of this patrol again. The battalion commander later told me that the 45th Division was approximately 2 miles to our left rear. Between 1100 and 1200, 13 September, a German tank attack developed on our left rear, coming from the north to the town of Persano which was about 1½ miles from our battalion CP. Our only exit by road was through Persano. Shortly after noon another tank attack hit us from the east, coming down the two principal east-west roads between the rivers. G Company was on the OPL and delayed the attack for about an hour, knocking out one tank with a bazooka. The main effort of the attack came from our left front, the sector of F Company, which was badly

¹⁵ FM 100-5, par. 482. "Commanders endeavor to reconstitute reserves from troops which the course of the action has made available."

¹⁶ FM 7-40, par. 276. "Secrecy is essential in the preparation and execution of the relief. The relief should be carried out under cover of darkness."

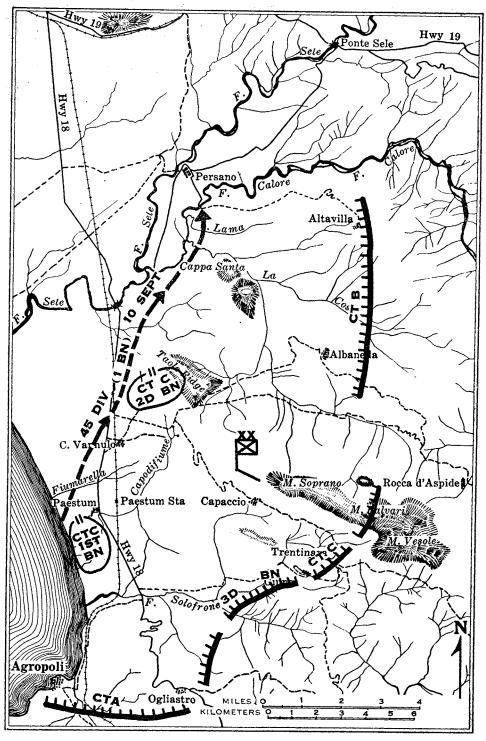


FIGURE 2. (10)

shot up and disorganized. The German tanks used machine guns and 75's, and infantrymen with mortars followed close in rear, shelling us with mortar fire. The mortars were heavy—about like our 81's—and their fire was terrific.

"Around noon our artillery liaison officer reached the CP and said he had a battalion of artillery to support us.¹⁷ The artillery forward observer arrived at Company G's position shortly before the attack and was shown likely concentrations which the CO, Captain Steffans, would probably ask for. The artillery forward observer returned to his radio truck, and was not seen or heard of after that. About one hour after the attack started, I asked our artillery liaison officer if he had contact, and he did have it for a few minutes, and then it was lost.

"Between 1630 and 1700 the battalion commander sent me to the assembly area previously designated for Company G to reorganize, with orders for the company to attack across the battalion left front, so that the left half of the battalion could withdraw south to the Calore River. Is I never found Company G, but about 1800 I reached the right flank of Company E which was still holding. I started back to the battalion CP, but within 400 yards of it 3 German tanks intercepted me and the 8 men I had picked up. They fired on us and chased us back to the Calore. In a ravine by the river I ran into Captain Steffans and 30 men of G Company. We crossed to the south bank and spent the night along the bank with listening posts out.

"So far as I know, most of the battalion must have been captured or else escaped by the river. It was hell up there, sir. The German tanks did not stop for prisoners; don't guess they had any infantry to take care of them. I was told by some of the men that the tanks went down the line of foxholes machine-gunning our men.

"Since the action I have collected 8 officers and 212 enlisted men of the entire battalion."

While the 2d Battalion of CT C was hard hit north of Calore River, the 3d Battalion was heavily engaged in the vicinity of Altavilla. At 1840, 13 September, a German breakthrough was reported west of the village. Tanks were sent out to repel the enemy attack.

At 1930 the commander of a tank destroyer battalion reported German tanks crossing the Calore south of Persano, and advised that his unit and a battalion of artillery which had been engaged with the tanks might have to withdraw because of machine-gun and automatic weapons fire.

 $^{^{17}}$ FM 7-40, par. 177a(1). "The supporting artillery is responsible for maintaining iliaison with the supported infantry unit."

¹⁸ FM 7-20, par. 207d. "Gaps created in the main line of resistance by armored attack must be filled promptly by the movement of supports or reserves."

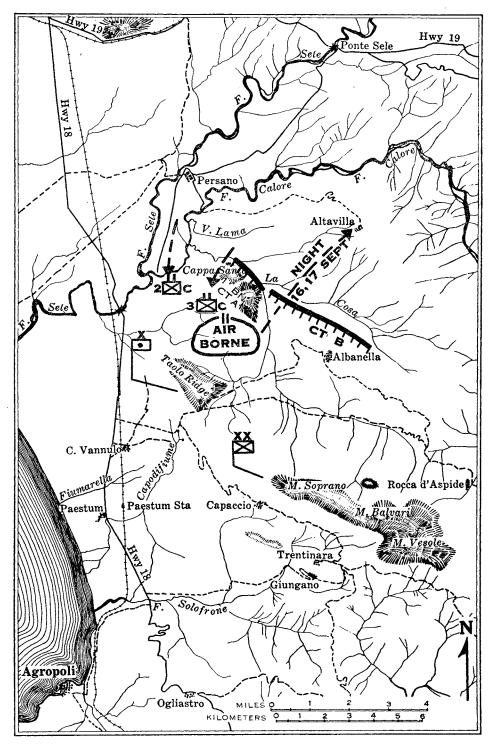


FIGURE 3. (12)

By direction of the Corps Commander the 36th Division withdrew all units behind La Cosa River during the night of 13-14 September and took up defensive positions (figure 3).¹⁹

The two infantry battalions of CT C were badly depleted. Combat Team B, however, had suffered fewer casualties. The 1st Battalion of CT A, one of the two battalions ordered north out of the sector the day before, was recalled and placed on the left of the division front near Cappa Santa. An airborne infantry battalion had arrived and was attached to the division.

The enemy made no determined attacks on the new position, but there was considerable artillery activity. During the afternoon of 14 September the navy shelled Altavilla with much reported damage. On 15 September the artillery action continued. The engineers worked in front of the division positions, constructing obstacles and laying mine fields.²⁰ At noon on 16 September patrols from the airborne infantry reported about 40 German tanks dug-in and camouflaged in hull-down positions on a reverse slope about 1½ miles southeast of Altavilla. A request for air-bombardment was refused because air reconnaissance could not locate the target. Naval guns and field artillery did, however, fire on the tank area.

On the night of 16-17 September the airborne troops attacked and recovered Altavilla and the adjacent high ground. Enemy resistance was slight, but on the 17th the Germans counterattacked—estimated strength an infantry regiment supported by artillery. The attack was an attempted double envelopment,²¹ and it became questionable whether the Altavilla position could be held. The division artillery assisted by firing heavy defensive concentrations, and that night another battalion was sent forward as reinforcements.

At this point the narrative ends.

LESSONS

1. Combat Against Tanks.

One of the outstanding features of the operations described in the preceding narrative is the number of encounters with German tanks and armored vehicles. They were first met on the beaches in the early hours of landing, and thereafter on numerous occasions. The experiences of the 36th Division again emphasize the importance of having artillery and antitank guns available wherever hostile tank action occurs, and also the great value of the rocket launcher as an antitank weapon.

(13)

¹⁹ FM 100-5, par. 596. "If, during the course of an attack, it becomes necessary to break off the action and withdraw, the command initially passes to the defensive." Par. 595. "The general position of attacking units is maintained until darkness, when the selected defensive position is occupied and organized.

²⁰ FM 100-5, par. 639. "Engineers are employed to impede the advance of the enemy by the execution of demolitions and by the creation of a zone of obstacles, including mine fields.

²¹ FM 100-5, par. 465. "A double envelopment is executed by three principal tactical groups, two enveloping attack forces and a secondary attack force. A simultaneous envelopment of both flanks generally requires considerable superiority."

Rocket launcher teams of CT C, when leaving the landing boats, consisted of 3 men with 4 rockets apiece, a total of 12 rounds for each launcher. The rockets were carried in packs made from condemned shelter halves. Each company had also 18 AT rifle grenades.

The commanding officer, as well as the executive and the S-3 of CT C, stated that the regiment was "sold" on both rockets and AT rifle grenades, but that personnel had insufficient ammunition for training with the launcher before going into action.

The 81-mm mortar proved highly valuable on at least one occasion against dug-in armored vehicles, and hostile use of the heavy mortar for close support of tanks was effectively demonstrated by the Germans in their successful attack against the 2d Battalion of CT C in the Sele-Calore corridor on 13 September.

2. Leadership.

It is obvious to say that the nine-days' operations of the 36th Division imposed a severe test on the leaders of all units. The landing in darkness under fire, the establishment of the beachhead in unknown terrain, the extensive area covered by the division, the enemy counterattacks, all these factors were a heavy tax on personal leadership, command initiative, and tactical skill. The following specific examples are given of situations encountered by unit leaders and of their reactions.

The leader of a 60-mm mortar squad reached shore with the second wave of an assault battalion. His orders were to keep on going from the beach and reorganize along the railroad track. As the squad left the boat, the gunner tripped on the ramp and lost the mortar overboard. In the darkness and the machine-gun fire, the platoon became scattered, and being unable to locate it, the sergeant and his squad joined the nearest unit, a part of the heavy weapons company of the same battalion. During the advance to the railroad the sergeant, and the men with him, captured a machine-gun position and 6 prisoners. Later on during the morning he was able to rejoin his own company.

A lieutenant commanding a heavy machine-gun platoon was cautioned twice by an observer for allowing the men to bunch during the advance inland from the beach. The unit finally took a more extended formation. While the platoon was halted under cover, nearby rifle units became engaged with the enemy. A high bank close at hand afforded both cover and a field of fire, but the lieutenant did not attempt to support the rifle units because he had received no orders to do so from his company commander who was not then in the vicinity.

During the first German tank attack near C. Vannulo on 9 September, a reserve rifle company was observed advancing in squad columns and under good control. During the tank action the company halted, and the company commander, 2 lieutenants, and 3 noncommissioned officers exposed themselves unnecessarily in a group to watch the fight. One pla-

toon leader was so interested as a spectator that he lost control of his men and did not realize that some of them had gone into action and were firing at the tanks.

While a platoon of the division reconnaissance troop was engaged on 9 September with 3 German armored cars dug-in in a field, the leader of a rifle squad in the vicinity flanked the enemy position while the 81-mm mortar fired on the Germans from a walled farm yard. The cooperation of this squad leader with the reconnaissance detachment was an important factor in dislodging the enemy.

Early in the first day's fighting, enemy snipers occupied a stone building near Paestum. After some firing between American soldiers and the snipers, a noncommissioned officer of CT C worked close enough to the building to clear out the enemy with hand grenades. As the stone building lay near the principal route of lateral traffic in the division sector, the destruction of the snipers was an important piece of work.

3. Defense By Isolated Units.

Because of the width and depth of the division sector, and the fluid nature of the operations, isolation of battalions occurred on several occasions, notably on 12-13 September near Altavilla and in the Sele-Calore corridor. While sufficient data is lacking to give a clear picture of the dispositions taken by the commanders in these two areas, it is evident that the positions should have been organized—whether they actually were or not—for all-around defense.

Where the front is too wide to be covered effectively by the troops available, units on the defensive must concentrate on holding "islands" of key terrain, with antitank weapons disposed to protect the perimeter of the island. Hostile forces which penetrate through the wide gaps—such as those which existed on the flanks of the battalion in the Sele-Calore corridor—must be taken care of by mobile reserves of the regiment or division.

In this connection, units forced on the defensive when temporarily isolated usually do not have engineer equipment available, and must depend upon their own intrenching tools, which was the case with the 2d Battalion of CT C north of Calore River on 12-13 September.

4. Use of Patrols.

In the fluid situation existing throughout the Salerno operations, patrols were used to a considerable extent. One example of important intelligence secured by them is the instance of the airborne infantry patrol which discovered the German tank area near Altavilla. The tanks, apparently, were so well dug-in and camouflaged that they were not picked up by air reconnaissance, and would not have been located except by efficient ground patrolling.

On 11 September the division employed motor patrols of CT B to clear out enemy detachments in the Altavilla area and to establish contact with units of another division in the Sele-Calore corridor.

5. Infantry-Artillery Teamwork.

The one instance where artillery support failed was in the Sele-Calore corridor on 13 September where the communications broke down. How much of this failure was due to the disappearance of the artillery forward observer and his radio truck is not clear, but this may have been the primary cause for the lack of artillery support.

However, effective artillery support was the rule rather than the exception throughout the operations. On several occasions German tank attacks were broken up, mainly by artillery fire. After the airborne infantry had recaptured Altavilla and had been counterattacked in force on 17 September, the division artillery laid down very effective concentrations in front of the defensive positions. For a time these concentrations consisted of 420 rounds, with 10-minute intervals between concentrations.

A German officer, an artillery observer captured at Altavilla, admitted that the German troops were afraid of the American artillery, and added that some of the enemy companies had been reduced to 30 effectives by 17 September.

Part Four: OPERATIONS ON GUADALCANAL

A TALK GIVEN BY

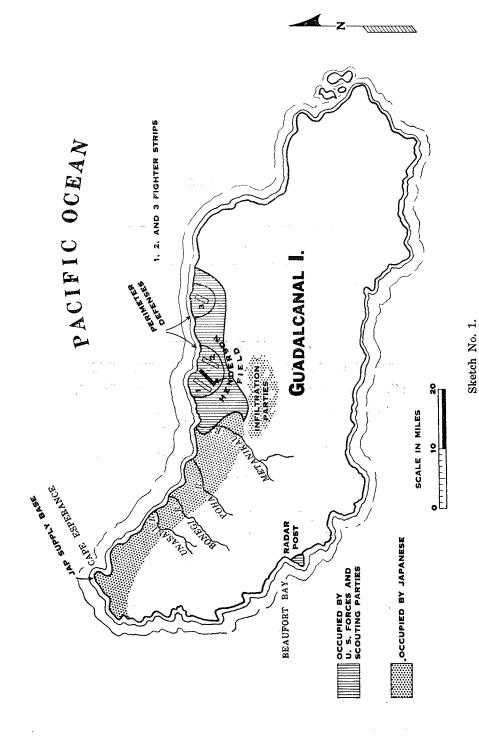
MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT L. SPRAGINS (Chief of Staff of Troops on Guadalcanal, Tulagi, and Florida Islands during the Operations)

TO

SELECTED ELEMENTS

 \mathbf{OF}

The Hawaiian Department
The 24th Infantry Division
The 27th Infantry Division
The 8th Infantry Division
The 89th Light Division
The 71st Light Division



(18)

Before we could launch an all-out attack against the Japanese on Guadalcanal, we had to make an estimate of the situation.

We had to consider the condition of our personnel and the condition of the Japanese. Two of our divisions on Guadalcanal, the Second Marine Division and the Americal Division, had seen combat and had casualties. They had been exposed for some months to tropical diseases: malaria, dysentery, and dengue. The records show that if a division is in the front line approximately three months, 80 percent of the men will catch malaria. Of the remaining 20 percent, some will have dysentery and some will have dengue. Malaria patients who have recovered and returned to the front lines are in a weakened condition. Our third division, the 25th, was just getting off transports at Guadalcanal. We wanted to launch the attack very quickly in order that this division, fresh from Hawaii, would not come down with sickness before the attack. We wanted at least one division which could maneuver and go through the jungle, capable of tremendous physical effort, capable of the movement necessary to put over a hard attack.

We had to consider also that we would get no further replacements. Our scheme of maneuver in any attack, therefore, had to conserve manpower. We knew the strength of the Jap line facing us, from the experience of the First Marine Division and the Americal Division, in coordinated attack against it. We also had gained knowledge from the experiences of the First Marine Division in attack against some of the Japs we were now facing.

The Japanese, on the other hand, had had the same sicknesses we had. We thought their sickness rate to be the same as in our two divisions. We learned later, however, that they had had more trouble with malaria, dysentery, and dengue than we. They also had beri-beri, which is caused by improper diet. Japanese replacements had been coming in by submarine, destroyer, and sampan at night. However, we thought they had spread their replacements through their units, so they were scattered throughout the whole command. This, later, proved to be true. There were, therefore, no Japanese units capable of the movement and efforts of our 25th Division. On the Japanese side there were three major units, the 2nd Division, the 30th Division, and a separate brigade. Half of that force had attacked our First Marine Division when it first landed in August, and had suffered heavy casualties. They had been engaged in a number of attacks and in defensive operations. Their casualties had been greater than ours.

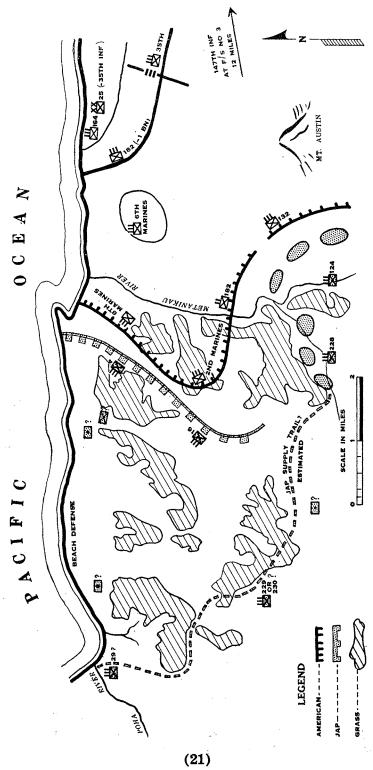
In our estimate we had also to consider the terrain. Guadalcanal is nearly 100 miles long from east to west and about 30 miles wide in the central part. Jungle covers the greater part of the island. The central part is mountainous and jungle covered, with some open grassy areas called "sabanas" interspersed through the jungle. Along the corridor, close to the coast, the terrain consists of jungle and scattered coconut plantations.

At the beginning of this campaign, we held a small area. (See Sketch No. 1.) We had captured Henderson Field, a bomber landing field. We had built two landing fields for fighter planes, shown on Sketch No. 1 as Strip 1 and Strip 2. Fighter Strip 3 was under construction 10 or 15 miles to the east. We had put perimeter defenses around our vital installations. Our front line was several miles west of the perimeter defenses. Japanese infiltration parties occupied the high ground south of our positions. The Japanese main forces were to the northwest, and they were using Esperance as a supply base.

We had Radar protection over the entire island. It was almost 100 percent perfect after we established the Radar station at Beaufort Bay. Despite this protection, some air raids got through without warning. Constant blackout was not attempted. We had to move supplies, and if we had used no lights our attack would have been held up. Trucks ran around the island with lights on. When we were warned of an air attack, the lights were turned off. We suffered casualties when surprise raids got through without warning. However, the small number of casualties from surprise raids did not justify a continuous blackout with its slowing effect on supply and other work in the rear.

In our estimate, we also had to consider what supplies we had available, the types and amounts of ammunition, the kinds and amounts of rations. We contemplated moving through the jungle to the rear of the Japanese, which would necessitate cutting loose from our supply lines and getting along with available emergency rations. We found we were short of K rations, so we issued them only to troops going through the jungle, and not to those supplied by "jeep road" and carrier in rear of our main advance. We issued C rations to these front-line troops. The opposing lines were very close together, often as close as 20 yards. Opposing lines over 100 yards apart were unusual. For troops in the front line, the only part of the mess kit allowed was the spoon. This was to reduce noise made by the soldier and to reduce sickness. Dysentery is carried by all raw water found on the island. It is found in spoiled food and is carried by flies from the bodies of dead Japs. Therefore mess equipment would have become contaminated by improper washing (boiling water is not available in the front lines) and by flies. Our troops got tired of C and K rations, but we couldn't help that. For the protection of health, this was the only solution.

The Japanese held all the high ground around our vital installations. (See Sketch No. 1.) They were generally in the jungle and high ground and we were generally in the lower ground which consists of grassy areas, some jungle, and some coconut plantations. They had constant observation of us. They could see the 25th Division coming into Guadalcanal. They could also see the only new regiment of the Second Marine Division, the 6th Marines, get off the transports. The only way we could surprise them would be by our scheme of maneuver.



At the beginning of this attack, our disposition was as shown on Sketch No. 2. We didn't know where the Japanese were, except in a few places. We knew the location of a part of the line held by the 4th and the 16th Japanese Infantry. We knew the location of the 124th Jap Infantry line in front of our 132nd Infantry and a battalion of our 182nd Infantry. We, however, did not know the location of the flank of the 124th Jap Infantry. We did not know the whereabouts of other Japanese infantry units. We knew that Jap artillery and beach defense units were, in general, along the corridor, with one artillery unit in the interior. actual Japanese dispositions against us included the 124th Jap Infantry and the 228th Jap Infantry in the positions shown on Sketch No. 2. These units, according to the history of the Japanese, were very formidable They had been in the campaigns in Malaya, Burma, Java, and the Philippines. The 228th Japanese Infantry belonged to the 30th Japanese Division, as did the 230th and 229th Japanese Infantry. of the latter two probably was in the position shown on Sketch No. 2 because as the attack developed infantry was met there, but not identified. The 16th and 4th Japanese Infantry belonged to the 2nd Japanese Division, as did the 29th Japanese Infantry (the latter, as yet, not located or identified). The 124th Japanese Regiment belonged to the separate brigade mentioned above.

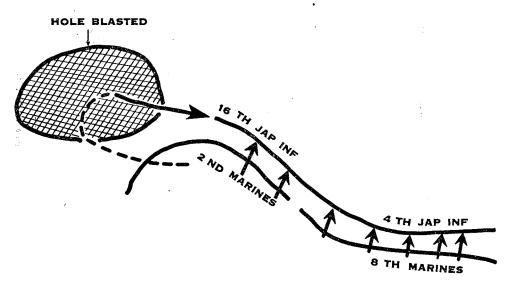
Our troops facing the Japs were the 8th Marines, the 2d Marines, one battalion of the 182nd Infantry, and the 132nd Infantry. Besides the front line, we had in reserve, in all-around defensive position, the 6th Marines. (See Sketch No. 2.) In the area containing our vital installations and protected by the perimeter defenses, we had the 164th Infantry and the 25th Division less the 35th Infantry. The 182nd Infantry, less one battalion, and the 35th Infantry were holding the perimeter defenses. The 147th Infantry, a separate regiment which did not belong to any of the divisions, was covering Fighter Strip 3.

On the north half of the line, the Second Marine Division planned to envelop the south flank of the 16th Japanese Infantry (a 90° envelopment). In order for them to do that, and for other reasons in connection with 25th Division operations, it was necessary to bomb and shoot a hole in the Jap front line. Right in the center of the Japanese line, we put down a tremendous artillery concentration and an air bombardment during which we dropped bombs of 100 to 1,000 pounds. Five or six battalions of artillery—105's, 155 howitzers, and 155 guns—were used. That was our only artillery preparation. We literally blasted a hole in the front line. Later, we found dead Japanese there who had been killed without being hit by fragments—killed by the concussion of the bombs. Some of these Japanese dead were in caves. These bodies were unmarked, but all their clothing had been blown off.

The 2d and 8th Marines made a holding attack against the Jap front and a 90° flank attack from the hole blasted in the Jap line. (See Sketch No. 3.) The line of the Jap 16th Infantry was in a gulch having almost

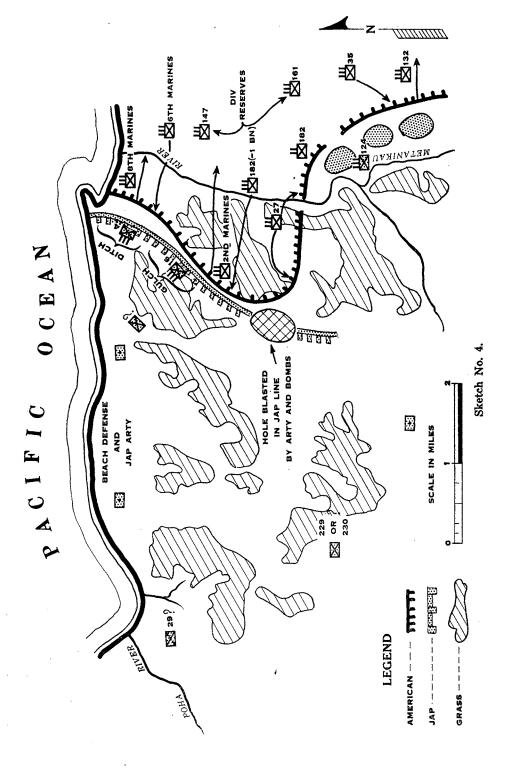
vertical sides. (See Sketch No. 4.) The Japs had dug caves in the walls of the gulch, with openings just big enough for them to crawl into. There was only one opening to each cave. This permitted fire in only one direction. The combined fires from many caves gave the criss-cross effect of fires shown in Sketch No. 5. Part of the cave occupants on either side of the gulch were shooting obliquely up the ravine and part down the ravine.

The Jap position was too strong for this type of attack. The question was, what were we going to do about it. The Marines tried to come down the ravine while holding and pushing against the front. But they couldn't do it. There was no way for them to get the Japs out of the caves half way up the sides of the precipice. They couldn't reach them. They couldn't throw grenades up there, and they couldn't shoot them out. If 37-mm guns had been emplaced on the crests, the Japs would have shot the personnel manning the guns. If we tried to go down the ravine, we were shot up from these caves.



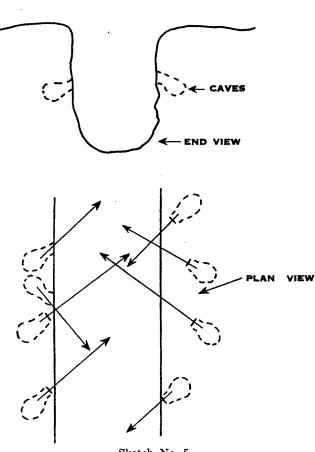
Sketch No. 3.

Down on the north end of this line was a ditch 5 to 10 feet deep. (See Sketch No. 4.) The Japs took an unusual position here, right in the bottom of the ditch, with the same type of caves—a hole just big enough for a little man to get into—and they fired out of these caves. All along the far side was a series of caves with holes through which they could shoot. (See Sketch No. 6.) They had very limited fields of fire, and they all fired in one direction, obliquely to the sea. The 8th Marines approached the ditch, got up to the bank, and could shoot at a range of 10 yards. When our men reached the top of the ditch, they would shoot to the front and all they hit was the side of the cave. The opening was at the north end.



The only way you could shoot into the cave was to go to the edge of the ditch and shoot obliquely. Our men didn't know that when they got to the edge of the ditch. Then the Japs shot us from behind from a number of concealed dug-outs which we had overrun. The 8th Marines didn't get beyond the ditch there.

DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION OF GULCH

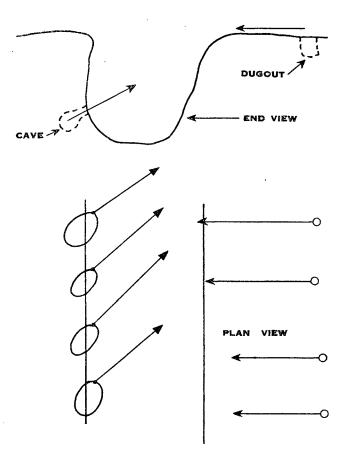


Sketch No. 5.

Remember, the 8th Marines and the 2d Marines had been subject to malaria and dysentery for a long period. We decided to relieve them with fresh troops. We put the 6th Marines on the right and the 182nd Infantry (less one battalion) on the left. (See Sketch No. 4.) We took the 147th Infantry off the landing field under construction (Fighter Strip 3), placed them in division reserve, and replaced them at the landing field with troops sent back from the front line. The 8th Marines and the 2d Marines were withdrawn and placed with the 164th Infantry in corps reserve. These units also guarded the vital installations in rear. (The 2d and 8th Marines were also scheduled to go to a rest area January 25th.)

Meanwhile we increased our strength on the south half of the line. In order to have a front line that could get up and go, we replaced the 132nd Infantry and part of the 2d Marines (tired units) with the fresh 25th Division. The 35th Infantry went in, in place of the 132nd Infantry. The 27th Infantry replaced elements of the 2d Marines in a passage of

DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION OF DITCH



Sketch No. 6.

lines. The battalion of the 182nd Infantry in contact with the Jap 124th Infantry was attached to the 25th Division. The 161st Infantry was placed in division reserve. (See Sketch No. 4.)

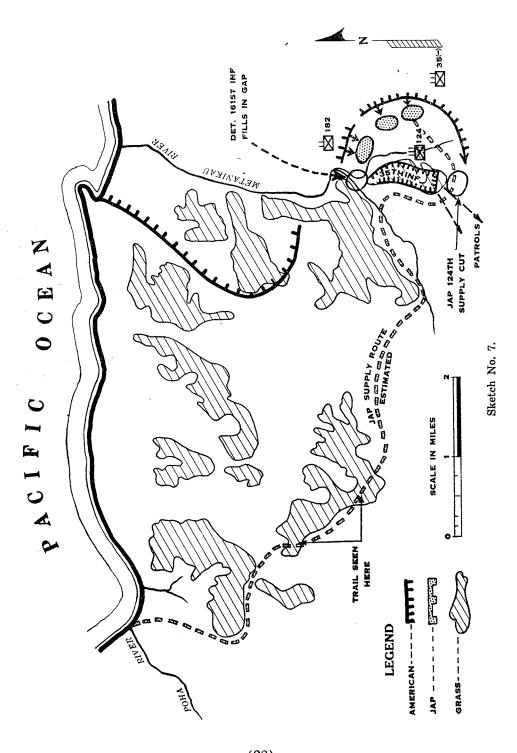
The 132d Infantry had tried without success to drive out the 124th Jap Infantry. So we had to execute a scheme of maneuver which would surprise the Japs. We sent patrols all through the jungle to the south and

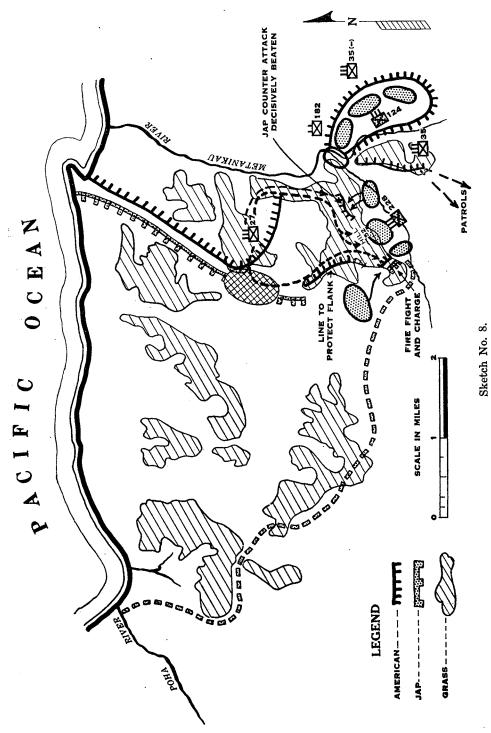
west of the Jap 124th Infantry. We found out where the Japs were not. Then the 35th Infantry, with one of the battalions of the 182d Infantry attached, marched through the jungle and surrounded the Japanese 124th Infantry. (See Sketch No. 7.) Our plan was for the 35th Infantry to go straight through the jungle, avoiding all trails, and come out in the vicinity where we estimated the Jap reinforcement and supply trail as well as their line of retreat had to be. From the sections of trail that we found on aerial photographs, we decided that the trail must follow the approximate line shown on Sketch No. 7. We had guessed within 25 yards at the point where we finally cut the trail.

We set up an all-around defense at the point where we cut the trail. The first thing we hit was the Japanese regimental command post, where we captured a map which showed the exact disposition of the 124th Jap Infantry. That helped us a great deal. That map was sent straight back, and quickly, to Corps Headquarters, where we had an interpreter. He interpreted the map and got it back to our 35th Infantry before darkness. The primary initial mission was interception of the trail; subsequently, the encirclement was completed. The circular line surrounding the Jap 124th Infantry had to be prepared to meet a possible Jap attack from any direction, but particularly from the west. A disposition to accomplish this was made as soon as the circle was formed. On the western side of the circle a line facing west, as well as east, was formed. (See Sketch No. 7.) Patrols were sent to the west and southwest. The side of the circle nearest the Corps was very lightly held, as division and corps reserves could readily meet any break-through on that side.

Elements of the 35th Infantry, in moving straight into the jungle, were on K rations. They had to chlorinate water. They had cut loose from supply and evacuation lines and had left the road. So we had to figure some way to get food and supplies to them. We used a captured sabana just west of the Jap 124th Infantry to drop supplies from the air to our 35th Infantry. Later we supplied them and evacuated wounded by way of the Matanikau River, by boat. The northern and eastern part of the encirclement was supplied over a jeep road.

As described in detail below, the 27th Infantry of the 25th Division engaged the Jap 228th Infantry in order to keep the Japs occupied and prevent their attacking the 35th Infantry encirclement. (See Sketch No. 8.) We completely surrounded the Jap 124th Infantry except for a little area to the north where two streams join. As units of the 35th Infantry moved around in the encirclement, they failed to close the gap at the stream junction and connect up with the battalion of the 182d Infantry on the north side of the encirclement. Our 161st Infantry was immediately available, so elements of this unit were moved down into this gap and closed it. (See Sketches Nos. 7 and 8.)





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To avoid casualties, we wanted to capture the encircled enemy (Jap 124th Infantry) without fighting. So instead of attacking we put down a very heavy concentration of artillery which was planned to hit smack bang in the middle of the circle and then to creep out to the enemy lines.

This was a delicate problem and it was handled very well. After the bombardment we placed a loud speaker on the hill and we made a speech in Japanese. We told them that they were surrounded and that we had just given them a little taste of bombardment. We said we would now give them a chance to surrender and that we'd treat them kindly. One man sneaked out of their pocket and surrendered. Nobody else—only one man. However, he was very valuable. He verified the position of every Jap unit that was shown on the map we had captured. He gave us more detail than the map did. We tried to persuade him to go back and tell the others that we hadn't tortured or harmed him.

But he said, "The fellows would kill me if I went back. They kill all those who wish to surrender."

"All right then," we said, "this loud speaker is away from them. Tell them over the loud speaker how you are."

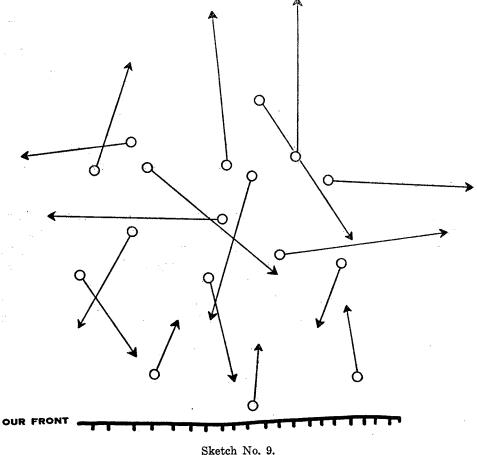
"Oh, no," he answered, "they might whip you Americans and catch me. They will kill me, and torture me before they kill me, if I tell them I have surrendered."

We gave them another bombardment. We closed in the circle and tightened in around those fellows as much as we could without making an all-out attack with the infantry. (See Sketch No. 8.) The Japanese positions are like porcupines. No matter which direction you attack, you get fired on. Each one of the dug-outs usually has just one opening and the dug-outs are inter-supporting. Out to the front of every one of these porcupine nests they had some dug-outs which they let us pass and then would shoot us in the rear. To run into a porcupine is a hard proposition. The best tactics were to block them from their food and water and shoot them up with artillery. (See Sketch No. 9.)

In order to keep the Jap 228th Infantry from coming against this circle, we had to do something more than just face in that direction. The 27th Infantry moved out onto a sabana to the south. We intended to engage any Japanese troops along that line and keep them fully occupied. We also wanted to allow our troops to move to their rear through the jungle and prevent their retreating until we were ready for them to retreat. (See Sketch No. 8.) The first contact we had was on a hill called Hill 52, partially on the sabana and partially in the jungle. Moving up on that hill we came under heavy mortar bombardment. Our troops used their heads very well. The leading battalion of the 27th split into two halves and went around the mortar bombardment, made close contact with the Japanese, but didn't charge them. They had been told not to charge them, but to find them and tell us where they were. We then would knock them out with

artillery and air. They did a very fine job and told us exactly where the Japs were.

We gave the Japs a terrific air and artillery bombardment. We'were able to put air in here because the Japanese were on the edge of the jungle and the edge of the sabana, right behind a prominent hill. Here was a prominent terrain feature to use as a guide—something the air could pick up easily. After the bombardment, the 27th Infantry was able to walk in with very few casualties and take that area. We had forced the Japanese back.



At this time the east flank of the 27th Infantry was not protected and although we didn't know it at the time, there was a threat on that flank. Leaving this flank open was a mistake. (See Sketch No. 8.) Attention of the 27th Infantry was called to its exposed east flank. No sooner had the 27th Infantry covered that flank than the threatening Jap unit popped out of the jungle and attempted to attack the flank and rear, which had been protected just in time.

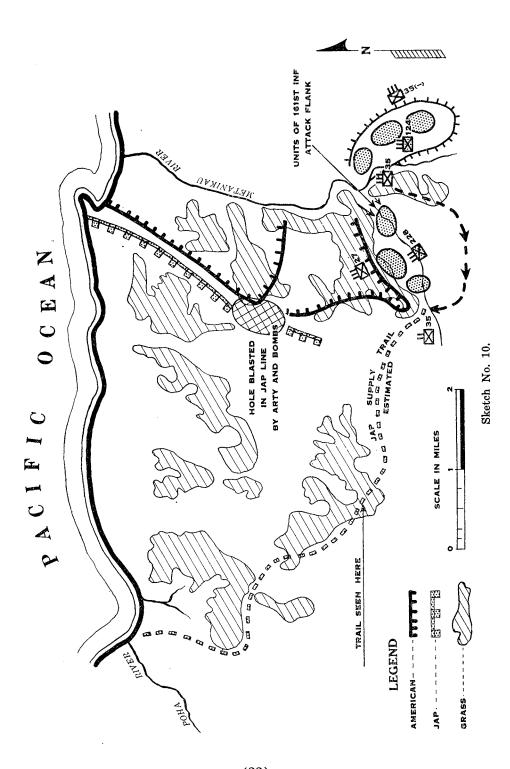
Every time the Japanese attack, they holler "Banzai." They hollered as they ran in on this attack and again our rifles mowed them down. When he hollers "Banzai," the Japanese thinks everybody is going to run, but we didn't run and they were mowed down as they charged. The charge was not well coordinated. It was made by a succession of small units charging from different points. Our men were able to concentrate their rifle fire on first one group and then another. There were a great number of Japacasualties. We continued to cover that flank and made contact with what Japs were left. We moved the 27th Infantry farther south to keep the enemy engaged.

One battalion of the 27th Infantry established a line on the west flank to prevent Jap reinforcements from coming through. They had to cover this line, and keep the Japanese engaged as we wanted to go down to what we called the "horse's head." (On the map, the sabana looks like a galloping horse upside down.) We sent another battalion of the 27th Infantry toward the horse's head, between the lines already established. (See Sketch No. 8.) Moving down, they struck Japs at the horse's neck on the geographic crest of a hill, on a grassy area, right out in the open. We didn't know the Japs were there until we hit them. They had moved out of the jungle and gotten up on the horse's neck when they saw we were advancing there.

They had dug foxholes about the size of an office waste basket. But the Japs are small men and they don't stand up in their foxholes. They draw their knees up under their chins and put their rifles over their knees pointing out of the holes. They are doubled up like jack-knives, and you can barely see their heads sticking out. If they don't want you to see their heads, they duck them down between their knees, between shots.

This battalion which attacked the horse's neck position made a very brave move. It made contact with the Japanese and charged with the old Gettysburg charge—just got up and ran at them. It cost them some casualties but it cost the Japanese more casualties and we took the hill. If they had cautiously reconnoitered there, located the Japanese, and reported as they had been told to do, we could have put artillery and air on them. We could have saved the lives of some of our men lost in this charge. We were much superior in both air and artillery.

At this point, the 27th Infantry was generally in the position shown in Sketch No. 10. They had these Japanese all engaged and there wasn't very much chance of their hitting the rear of the 35th Infantry circle. At the same time, we wanted to encircle the 228th Japanese Infantry without paying the cost of a direct attack. From the 35th Infantry we sent one battalion straight through the jungle on K rations with no line of supply, to a position just south of the horse's head. (See Sketch No. 10.) Its mission was to cut the supply trail of the 228th Jap Infantry. We knew the trail left the beach road in the vicinity of the Poha River. We had picked up by air photos where it crossed a sabana in two places. We therefore



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guessed it would run through the jungle in approximately the manner shown in Sketch No. 10. This battalion got through the jungle and got in position. It and the 27th Infantry made contact and cut the Jap supply trail. The Japs, engaged on the front, didn't realize we had gone behind them. Now we had the 228th Jap Infantry more or less surrounded. If he had known exactly where we were he could have gotten out in the jungle to the south and moved around us. He stayed in the jungle defending to the north, however.

We now sent elements of the 161st Infantry and struck the 228th Japanese Infantry on the right flank, driving them in the direction of the block established by the battalion of the 35th Infantry. (See Sketch No. 10.) The first unit hit by our 161st Infantry was disorganized and these disorganized fellows retreated, running into the next Jap unit west of them. All of them tried to pull out. They struck our block and couldn't get any farther. When they were out of the holes and caves and had struck our block, we concentrated four or five battalions of artillery on them. Our artillery shot just ahead of the 161st Infantry. We couldn't count the bodies as they were too badly blown apart. We found heads, arms, legs, and bodies strewn about.

At two o'clock in the morning the Japanese tried to break out. They made an attack against our trail block. A couple of our men broke, started to yell and run away. We had a couple of good noncoms in there who got up and grabbed these men and shook them into consciousness or knocked them into unconsciousness, I don't know which; at any rate, the line held. If those two noncoms hadn't taken hold of that situation very quickly, there might have been disorder and the whole of the 228th Jap Infantry could have escaped, and we would have had to fight them clear along the coast. The panic of two or three men would have completely wrecked all the good work that had been done had it not been for the prompt action of those two noncoms.

At one point where the Japs attempted to break out through this trail block there were a sergeant or a corporal and two men. All three of them were wounded. Their light machine gun was knocked out of action, but they stayed in position and fought with hand grenades and rifles. Finally, the noncom sent a message back to the platoon leader telling of the situation. One of the wounded men took the message and the other two stayed and held back several times their number of Japanese. The Japs didn't get through. The 228th Jap Infantry was blown to bits.

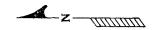
The Jap 124th Infantry really put up a fight and didn't give ground at all. We kept closing in on them and they would get panicky and charge our lines. They charged by small groups here and there, which would get shot up quite badly. We thinned our lines to the northeast, thinking they would try to get out to the west. About 30 men broke through these thinned lines and created quite a little disturbance. They attacked the 35th Infantry command post and delayed its work, forcing it to defend itself and

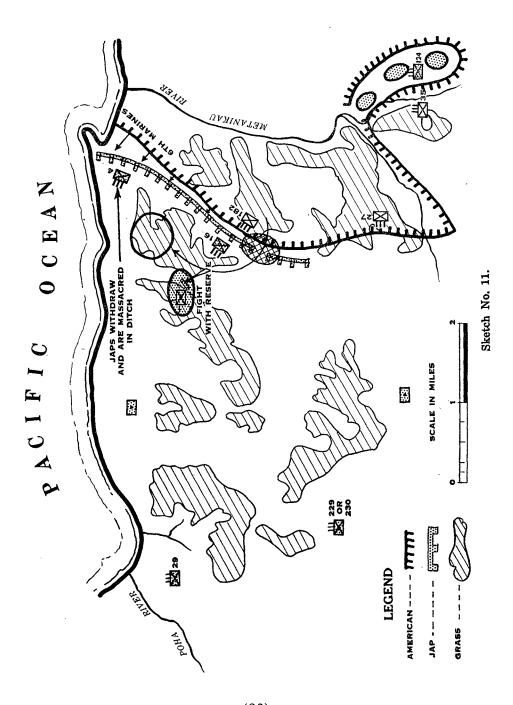
then went back into the jungle. Later, they attacked an artillery battery and put it out of action for a short time, while it defended itself with small arms. They went deeper into our rear areas and attacked the 25th Division command post. This station was not properly organized for allaround defense. Many men didn't know what they were supposed to do. Some ran behind boxes and returned the fire. Others hid under palm leaves. Some jumped into slit trenches thinking it was an air attack. One man showed a lot of coolness and sat in his tent and continued to typewrite. It was rather courageous for him to sit there and continue to type. But in such circumstances he might have used his courage to better purpose than to write while all this firing was going on around the command post. The Japs also jumped an ammunition dump. The ammunition dump was not organized for defense either. The Japanese will infiltrate, whether on offensive or defensive. Be prepared to meet them. See that each man knows what part in all-around defense he ought to take. Be sure that each man knows his job.

During this action to the south, the attack on the north half of the line had not gone far. The Japanese held the high ground in back, overlooking their main line of resistance in the gulch and ditch. We decided that as long as we couldn't take the ravine frontally we would surround it as we had the 124th Jap Infantry, making our attack through the gap blown in the line. (See Sketch No. 11.) As this attack progressed, the Marines made contact with the Jap reserve unit and a fight started. When the Japs in the gulch heard the fighting to their rear, they immediately became concerned.

The Japanese High Command had told all units to hold their positions at any cost. The Jap 124th Infantry had obeyed this order and so made it easier for us to surround them. The same order had played into our hands in surrounding the 228th Jap Infantry. The 228th had disobeyed the order, but only after a struggle. The Jap 4th Infantry also disobeyed the orders, because as soon as they heard fighting back of them, they started running down the ditch to the north. We moved 37's and machine guns and riflemen onto the high ground to shoot right down that ditch. As they were climbing out of their defense caves and running north, we piled the ditch full of dead Japanese. As those in the precipitous gulch piled out of the gulch into the ditch, we got them too. The ones we didn't get there started to go down the corridor along the coast and we got them in considerable numbers. Some got back to the rear. They all had to leave the gulch and ditch because they couldn't get food or water.

Having gotten by the most difficult part of the Jap line, we planned to push straight west down the corridor along the coast with the 6th Marines and the 182d Infantry. We thought the going would be a little faster now. We thought the units near the coast would go faster than the



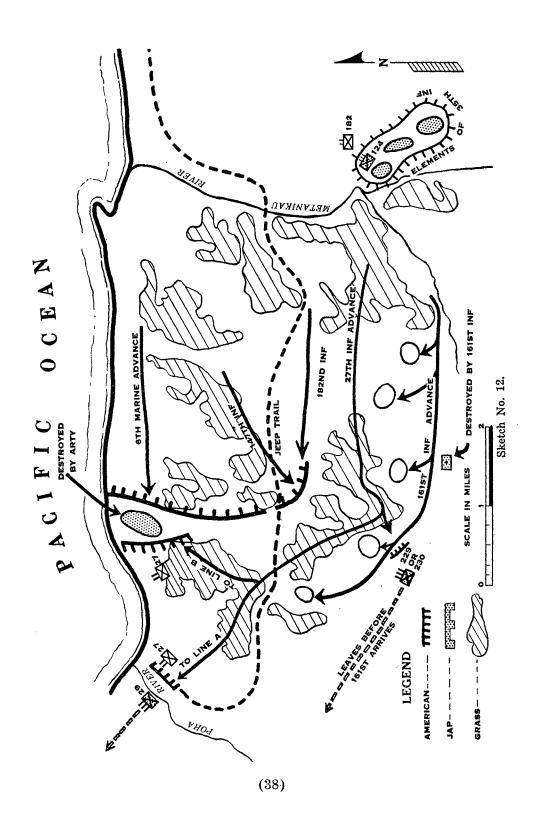


fresher units of the 25th Division, which had to travel through difficult terrain for a distance of six miles. The route along the coast was only 6,000 yards of relatively easy terrain. (See Sketch No. 12.)

As the 6th Marines advanced frontally, the 182d Infantry disposed units successively along the left flank for protection against an attack by the Japanese from the south and to maintain contact with the 25th Division. Our plan called for the 27th Infantry to attack to the west farther south. The 161st Infantry had not been heavily engaged in driving the 228th Jap Infantry into the pocket and they were in a position to jump off to the west to cover the flank of the 27th Infantry and put the Jap artillery to the southwest out of action. When our 27th and 161st Infantry had disposed of the 228th Japanese Infantry, the 27th Infantry went forward with its attack aimed right in through the broken and disorganized Jap line. The idea was to surround the Japanese before they got away in front of the 6th Marines. We wanted to head them off with the 27th Infantry. Therefore, we had to get ahead of them and establish a line (see Sketch No. 12) facing to the east. That line had to protect its rear by driving the Japs in its rear across the Poha River and by establishing a river defense line thereon facing northwest. As we moved forward, the 6th Marines and the 182d Infantry lost contact in the jungle. The reserve regiment, the 147th Infantry, filled this gap. The composite Army-Marine Division attack was supported throughout by one battalion of Marine Artillery and the Americal Division Artillery. (The remainder of the 2d Marine Division Artillery was not on Guadalcanal.) The XIV Corps was supported by the XIV Corps Artillery; the 25th Division by the 25th Division Artillery. Massing of some of the division artillery fires of one division in front of the other division was resorted to on occasion.

As the 27th Infantry moved forward in its attack to pocket these Japs, it passed elements of the 182d Infantry. These elements were used to reconstitute the composite Army-Marine division reserve. The 27th Infantry advance struck a Japanese reserve which must have been the 230th or 229th Jap Infantry. It was never identified. The 27th Infantry did a very fine job. It didn't become entangled with that reserve, but put a small force in there to contain it and went right ahead. Then the 27th Infantry turned north and later established two lines: one line (Line A) along the Poha River, driving out elements of the 29th Japanese Infantry and facing north and northwest to keep the Japanese from coming in on the rear of the other line (Line B) which faced east. As the 27th Infantry got to Line B and the 6th Marines got to the position shown on Sketch No. 12, they were very close together with the Japanese in between.

All our artillery had been trying to get these Japanese. The 6th Marines and the 27th Infantry were each concerned that the other's supporting artillery did not fire into them, and justly so. Actually, our artillery didn't shoot into our own troops. We had to expect that some artillery fragments would hit some of our troops, and they did. Our men didn't like



the fragments, but the Japanese got a lot more of them than we did. We simply had to shoot out the Japanese. In order to get those Japs and not hit our own troops with direct hits, we had to adjust the artillery in the Pacific Ocean and creep in on the Japanese until we got them. Again the artillery did very fine work.

The Jap unit that was being contained by elements of the 27th Infantry to the southwest decided it was time for them to move before larger forces got in on them. They broke contact with our units and escaped through the jungle under cover of darkness.

Our 161st Infantry disposed of Japanese artillery units along their route and advanced straight through the jungle to cover the flank of the 27th Infantry. They had been told to establish a series of all-around defenses and to continue to cover the flank of the 27th Infantry. (See Sketch No. 12.) Between these defense posts, which were somewhat separated, it was necessary to send patrols to guard against Japanese coming out of the jungle to intercept the supply road in the rear of the 27th Infantry. We ran a jeep road in rear of the 27th Infantry route of advance and that road had to be covered with a series of positions, each providing all-around defense. If the Japs hit one of these positions, we would counterattack from two others. If we got too heavily engaged we would have to use a reserve unit from Corps or Division.

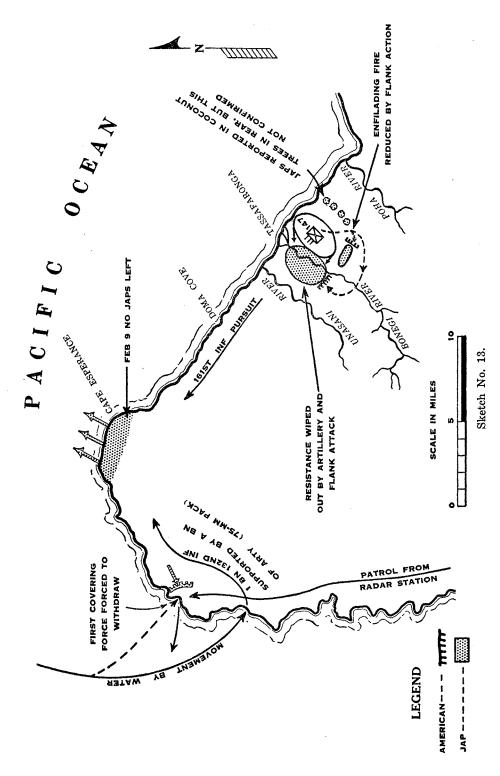
At this time what was left of the 124th Japanese Infantry was still sewed up in a pocket. They had been gradually reduced by artillery fire. Finally a captain in the 35th Infantry got the idea of using a tank. It was hard to move a tank up there and to operate in the jungle against the Jap 124th Infantry. We covered the tank with our infantry while operating in the jungle, so the Japs couldn't shoot at the drive sprocket, track pins, or anything that would cause it to halt. We drove that tank right up to each dugout and shot a 37mm shell into the hole. In one case we came so close to the Japanese ground-hog hole that we couldn't depress the gun sufficiently to shoot into the hole. We had to back away a few yards to hit the Jap. We eliminated the Japanese a little quicker with the tank, but even so, they held out for a total of twenty-one days.

During these operations, on or about 25 January, an unusual situation developed. The Naval Commander in the South Pacific had certain information which led him to believe that the Japs might attack Guadalcanal within a week or ten days with a strong naval, air, and land force. He so notified the Commanding General, XIV Corps. While some of us in the Army did not expect this Jap attack to materialize, we had to make dispositions to meet it. We had figured how many Jap transports were in the South Pacific area. The total was eleven. If the Japs put 3,000 troops on each transport they could bring in only 33,000 troops. Some of the transports, and we estimated at least half of them, would be sunk by our Naval and Air Forces. Therefore, the Japs might be expected to land only some 15,000 to 17,000 troops. We had on the island, counting supply, air and Naval troops, a total of some 50,000. We were confident we had decisively

defeated the main Jap force on Guadalcanal. We, therefore, felt that the Japs would not attempt to defeat 50,000 troops with some 16,000 or 17,000 plus the remnants of a disorganized Japanese force which was already on Guadancanal. In addition, we felt that we were more than equal to the Japanese in the air with the advantage of our bases very near while the Jap bases were distantly removed. We also felt that we were more than equal to the Japanese on the sea, although we did not have detailed information on that point. We had also noted that in recent days the Japs had been fighting delaying actions even though close to their supply base and landing beaches. If they, at this time, had expected strong reinforcements we felt that they would have put up a strong defense to hold those bases free from molestation. In this defense, we were sure that had they expected reinforcements they would have counterattacked the force that we moved by water to encircle them and prevent their fighting a delaying action all around the perimeter of Guadalcanal Island. However, the Naval Commander was in supreme command and we felt that we now needed only a small force to close out the Jap, and that our main mission now was to be prepared to meet this land, sea, and air Jap threat. We therefore withdrew the 25th Division (less elements of the 35th Infantry still engaged with the Jap 124th Infantry) from action and placed it in corps reserve. With elements of the 2d and 8th Marines, with Naval base personnel, with supply personnel and with the Americal Division (less one battalion of the 132d Infantry, one battalion of the 182d Infantry and certain artillery units), we covered the beaches to the north of our vital installations and our vital installations themselves. We were confident of defeating any Jap reinforcements that might arrive, and were hoping that they would attempt a landing. We had prepared a formidable plan and made dispositions accordingly. The land, sea, and air threat of the Japanese did not materialize.

Meanwhile along the coast the 6th Marines were ordered to advance on a comparatively broad front with a battalion in the lead and a series of flank guards to protect their left flank. This advance was mostly through coconut plantations with jungles on the left flank. This required a good many flank guards—every 500 to 1,000 yards, depending upon the thickness of the jungle. The Jap fought a delaying type of action at a stream a short distance northwest of the Poha, as he had on the Poha River. This indicated that the Japs were not going to land more troops, and as we went along we got further confirmation of this. They were fighting a delaying type of action close to their own supply bases and close to landing beaches.

The 147th Infantry replaced the 6th Marines. The 147th Infantry moved down the coastal corridor very rapidly. (See Sketch No. 13.) They went so fast that the flank guard couldn't keep up with them and as a result their flank became exposed. When they got near the Bonegi River, they ran into a Jap ambush. The Japs were up in the jungle on their left



flank and across the Bonegi River to the front with an outpost on the east side of the river. They were completely boxed in except for the Pacific Ocean.

The 147th Infantry was in a bad situation. There were Japs on all three sides, but we didn't know where the main Japanese line was. To find the Jap line, a detachment was sent up the right flank near the ocean. The Japanese let our detachment go past their outpost and didn't even open up on them. The Japs finally opened fire on our men from their MLR. Our men jumped behind a gravel bar and kept on watching until they located where the fire was coming from. Three squads of our men had crossed the Bonegi River on a sand bar at its mouth and were cut off. Finally, from our side of the river, our men spotted a machine-gun nest on the Japanese left flank. With observation straight up the river, our men could see the edge of the jungle on the far side of the river. We finally drew fire and located the Jap MLR on the far bank of the river. Part of the detachment slipped out into the ocean, came around the Japanese outpost position, and brought information back. They then directed mortar fire on the left flank of the Japanese position, knocking out the machine-gun nest. The first shot with a 60-mm mortar was 10 yards short but hit in the water and the fragments sprayed beautifully up on the bank. The second was 15 yards short, and the third shot was a direct hit. We kept the mortar fire on there to permit withdrawal of the rest of our detachment.

The regimental reserve was sent to the left rear to strike the flank of the Japanese resistance that was infiltrating our position. Part of the reserve continued on (see route indicated on Sketch No. 13), cut in behind the Japs, crossed the Bonegi River on the upper reaches where it was fordable, and came down on the enemy main defensive positions. The Bonegi was unfordable down below. During this flank movement our main force engaged the Japanese only 20 yards away across the unfordable part of the Bonegi River.

As this flanking detachment came down, having located the Japanese main line defenses, we put six battalions of artillery on these defenses from south to north as our envelopment moved in. The artillery shot, in effect, a creeping barrage in front of our enveloping force which was moving on a narrow front. It was quite successful. The Japanese had held the positions for two days and one night.

The 25th Division came back into the chase with the 161st Infantry relieving the 147th Infantry. We decided to get in boats and go around behind the Japanese and hold them in place. Having decided on this plan, we had to make a reconnaissance. We didn't want to land against heavy Japanese resistance.

We sent a patrol from the Radar station on Beaufort Bay at the southwest coast of the island. (See Sketches Nos. 1 and 13.) The patrol was told to find out where the Japs were *not*. They followed instructions implicitly. But Corps G-3 had failed to inform Corps Assistant G-3

of these instructions, and when the latter got the report he sent back a reply:

"We don't care where they are not. We are fighting the Japs. Go back and find out where they are."

The patrol went back and engaged the Japs. Meanwhile we had sent a covering force, by water, to land and occupy a particular beach on the west coast of the island. But the engagement between our patrol and the enemy had alerted the Japs, and they got to the landing beach first. The covering force was shot up and we had to start over again from the beginning.

The patrol found another bay unoccupied and we put the covering force in there. A battalion of the 132d Infantry supported by a battalion of 75-mm pack artillery of the 2d Marines went around and landed. This force was to advance up the shore until they found a defile and struck sufficient Japs to stop them. They were then to hold a defile between the mountains and the sea and prevent the Japanese from escaping. The Japs were just fighting a delaying action all around. The advance continued and the 161st Infantry was finally contacted at Cape Esperance.

The 161st Infantry crossed the Unasani River with but little resistance and continued its advance up the corridor; on 9 February it made contact with the reinforced battalion of the 132d Infantry. All Jap organized resistance was now crushed.

We had notified the Navy representatives on Guadalcanal on 28 January that we thought the Japs would withdraw from the island. On the night of 1-2 February some 20 Japanese destroyers arrived. The abandoned small boats seen in the water the next morning indicated rather plainly that the Japs were carrying out an evacuation and not a reinforcement operation. We afterward learned rather positively what we had suspected; namely, that they were evacuating troops by sampans, destroyers, and submarines. On the night of 4-5 February they brought in 15 or 20 more destroyers. There were a lot of small boats left drifting which indicated they were in a hurry to get on the destroyers and get away before our Navy could catch them. On the night of 7-8 February they brought in some 15 or 20 more destroyers and left the boats out there on the water again. At one time we attacked these destroyers with PT boats and suffered rather heavy casualties.

Our attack had begun on 10 January and we closed the Japs out on 9 February. There was nothing left on the island but a few scattered Japanese. All the generals and some appreciable number of other officers and men escaped. Estimates of the number vary a great deal.

LESSONS

The Japanese shoot a .25 caliber rifle which sounds like a .22 long. It is hard to locate as it produces very little smoke. Their heavy machine gun is slow-firing and is not as good as our heavies. Nor are their light

machine guns as good as ours. Even at 30 or 40 yards, their light machine gun shoots a pattern the size of a big wastebasket. It has a high cyclic rate and sounds much like our Reising or Thompson submachine gun.

I have mentioned different combinations of Japanese-type defensive positions. They might be like the porcupine nest in the ravine half way up the precipice. Such dugouts are hard to attack. When we locate them, we ought to have a weapon that can put them out with one or two cracks. There were no bazookas in Guadalcanal. I don't know whether they would have gone off against soft dirt with logs mixed in. An ordnance officer on the general staff thought they could be made to go off and penetrate the sides of the dugouts. The old type 37-mm gun breaks down into loads, but we couldn't get the new type 37-mm through the jungle. You can knock out the pillboxes with direct fire, but an artillery concentration doesn't clear out a porcupine defense. It just throws fragments around and doesn't hit all the boxes. The solution may be the bazooka and also artillery in the front lines as accompanying guns. Always before attacking a Jap position reconnoiter and find out all about it. This will help immensely in your attack and in the placing and use of supporting weapons. Use supporting weapons carefully and consider status of ammunition supply.

Jap patrols try to mislead and trap our patrols. One of our reconnaissance patrols saw two Japs crawl on all fours down a trail, followed at some distance by the main patrol. If the two leading Japs had been attacked and killed, the rest of the patrol could have swung out through the jungle and got around our men while they examined the dead bodies. Our men could thus be killed or captured. More than likely, the Japs wanted to take prisoners.

The Jap prisoner is valuable but hard to get. We took about 300 all told. They are brought up to think we are heathen; that we punish, tear, and cut to pieces all our prisoners. However, once captured, they talk quite freely. If they don't talk, we ask them questions such as, "What's your name?" and "Where do you come from?" Generally they will answer that correctly, but if we find later that they are not speaking truthfully, we tell them we will send their names back to Japan. Then they open up, for they know that if this happens their families will be punished and persecuted for the disgrace caused by the surrender of father, brother, or son.

In general, we had to take able bodied prisoners by force. If they didn't have malaria or dysentery or were not disabled, we had to bush-whack them, jump on them and overpower them. You don't need many, but a trickling of prisoners is necessary from all over the front in order to get the enemy dispositions and other valuable information. We had to jump on them and knock them out without killing them, all this at considerable risk to ourselves. A very few voluntarily surrendered.

The greatest care in tropical sanitation and health protection must be exercised.

The squad leader must control his squad in the attack. If he elects to take part in the fire fight in an emergency or when he considers that the fire power to be gained by his firing outweighs the necessity for close control of his squad, he must not continue to shoot as a private. He must be alert, enforce fire discipline, and maintain contact with his platoon leader.

When you establish an all-around defense against infiltration, you must have a responsible leader corresponding to the squad leader for every sector of the front. That leader must look around and see that the men shoot at the right target and keep looking for the Japanese. Don't let Japanese in from one direction while the squad is shooting in another.

In the jungle the platoon leader can't see all his platoon, and the squad leader can't see all his squad. It is often desirable for the squad leader to split his squad and give half to the second-in-command and half to himself. This assists the platoon leader and higher commanders in maintaining control.

We can whip the Japs if we use our brains. They don't use theirs so well, so we can outsmart them. Their defenses are formidable, but their counterattacks were not well handled.

No higher commander can help you when you are out there in the jungle by yourselves. You are on your own and you have to control your men. There is no type of warfare that puts such a premium on the junior commanders.

The best communication we had was wire. On the offensive, use wire. Going through the Jungle, you have got to have a limited objective attack. Wire can keep up with this type of attack. While lines are being established and the enemy dispositions located for the next attack you have time to lay wire. Except for our water move and the move of one battalion of the 35th Infantry in rear of the Jap 228th Infantry, we always kept up communication with wire until the pursuit started and even then until we ran out of wire.

Even on offensive operations we must be prepared for all-around defense. Every rear establishment and reserve unit must have all-around defense, and front-line units must be covered in rear and on flank by supports and reserves.

Always prepare alternate positions. When the Japs are close to you, don't remain at night in a position which you have occupied during daylight. The Jap then knows where you are and will bayonet you or drop a grenade on you in the dark. One of our regiments had a listening post outside the line with two men in the position in a foxhole. They failed to have alternate foxholes into which the men would get at night. They might better have gotten out of the hole right into the open. But they didn't, and the Japs sneaked out one night and bayoneted them both.

Always think of and use your supporting weapons to save lives.

We are organized in combat teams. This is not the only way of fighting. We used one combat team operation in this maneuver on Guadalcanal. That was the water movement of the reinforced battalion of the 132d Infantry. Other than that one operation, artillery was used massed. These heavy concentrations, with precise registration and accurate control, were one of our most effective means of disposing of the enemy.

Use your engineers very sparingly as infantry. You will have more engineer tasks than your engineers can handle.

We used the bayonet very little. In general, when you have a loaded rifle, why stop to stick somebody when all you have to do is pull the trigger? Sometimes, however, the bayonet is very useful. In one case 18 or 20 Japs from the 124th Jap Infantry got out of the pocket and started to beat it to the rear. A patrol of the 35th Infantry was sent out to kill these men. The Japs didn't know they were coming. The patrol leader used exceptionally good sense. The Japs got strung out. When the patrol caught up with them, they decided not to shoot. The patrol went forward and caught one or two at a time and killed them with bayonets, from the rear to the front.

When patrolling, don't be noisy and don't bunch up. I recall going up to the pocket where the 124th Jap Infantry had been, to view what was left of one of our 10-man patrols. This patrol had started out in good formation but evidently committed one or both of the errors just mentioned. The Jap machine gun, sited 30 yards away, wouldn't fire on one or two men but ten men, bunched up, were a good target. These men were killed at a range of 30 yards and fell across one another, all within a radius of 10 feet of each other. Don't take that chance.

Our patrols were generally too noisy. They talked too loud. They even laughed out loud. Natives were sent out as leading elements with our men. Pretty soon they wanted no more of our men because they were too noisy.

After we had taken the Bonegi River position, we put out a patrol which had some intelligence personnel with it. The patrol found some documents in rear of the captured position and were examining them in a compact little group as G-3 and I came up to see what was going on. Gathered in a small circle, they were examining pictures taken from dead Japs of Burmese or Javanese girls in different stages of dress or undress. They should not have congregated in such a group for any reason, and they should not have been wasting time, when documents of value to the campaign were wanted in the shortest possible time. So we sent them on their way—dispersed. I, being the senior officer, took the best looking pictures.

Jungle attacks are habitually limited objective attacks for many reasons including the time it takes to determine enemy dispositions and effect any necessary reorganization of our own troops, time for building roads and bridges thus insuring continuity of supply, and time to establish proper communication.

Whenever a unit is cut loose from its supply line for an encirclement, remember that you must plan on again connecting up with that unit with a supply line before its supplies are exhausted.

All units especially infantry should be able "jungle navigators;" that is, they must, by surveying methods, be able to tell where they are in a jungle at all times, and be able to proceed to a point on the ground, pointed out to them on an air photo or map. (An example is the encirclement of the Jap 228th Infantry by the 35th Infantry.)

Boundaries in the jungle are often impossible to designate. Compass direction, frontage, base units, and connecting groups between units are necessary substitutes in jungle warfare to facilitate control.

While I was on National Guard duty in Alabama, I went quail hunting with a farmer; the dog stood a covey of quail and the farmer started tracking them with his gun through the brush along the ground. I asked him if he was going to shoot those quail running on the ground that way. "Hell, no," he said, "I'm going to wait until they stop and bunch up." Above, I gave you an example of bunching up. I could give you dozens of them. One of the most important things in jungle fighting is the command exercised by the squad leader, next by the platoon leader, next by the company commander. You have to stop this bunching up by your men. They are just like that covey of quail, they get excited and frightened and want to bunch up; not good sense—just animal instinct.

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